

Dear SIC Members and Friends:

This issue of *SIC Clips & Quips* (Volume 2, Issue 4) shares information on several items of importance for all School Improvement Council Members.

- **School and District Report Cards Will be Released on April 16.** Remember that report cards will look a little different this year as we make the shift from the PACT to the PASS test. Report cards will tell you if the educational goals for students in your school and district were “met, not met, or exemplary.” The Absolute ratings for schools and districts (meaning their overall score) and the Growth ratings (formerly “Improvement” ratings - meaning did the Absolute scores move up or down from last year) now include: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and At-Risk. More detailed explanation of the report card information can be found at www.ed.sc.gov or www.eoc.sc.gov.
- **The Annual SIC “Report to the Parents”** is required by state law to be issued to school communities by April 30th each year. Need help with yours? Give us a call or visit our website, <http://sic.sc.gov/publicationsanddownloads/sicreporttotheparents.htm>. And a shout out to the Oconee County SICs – they have completed their reports and Oconee County SIC District Contact Kay Powell has already sent our office a packet with a copy of every report. Way to go! **We ask that all SICs send a copy of their “Report to the Parents” to our office (either by U.S. Mail or electronically) by June 1st** so that we can better assist SICs and get a more comprehensive picture of what SICs are doing across the state. Sending us your Report also serves as an accountability measure and provides us with data and information SC-SIC needs to share more about its work and impact on local SICs.
- **SC’s Budget for Public Education – How Much Money Goes “In the Classroom?”** – A major debate in the SC House of Representatives during their “budget week” focused on what percentage of our tax dollars go “into the classroom.” The budget passed by the House increases the requirement from 65% to 70%. As the budget talks move to the Senate next week, we thought we would take a look at how our school districts are allocating their budgets. Follow this link to see the numbers from your school district in 2007-2008 according to *In\$ite*: <http://bit.ly/aISdC5> as recorded by the SC Department of Education. You will see the information broken out into four categories: 1) Face-to-face Teaching – teachers, substitutes and paraprofessionals, and classroom materials and supplies including technology and software for student use; 2) Instruction Support – includes student, teacher and program supports such as guidance counselors, library media, student health, therapists, teacher in-service and staff training and more, 3) Non-instructional Services like food, safety and buses, and 4) School Management – includes principals, assistant principals and office staff. If you accept that each of these four categories is necessary and desirable in our public schools you will find that no district reports less than 75% allocated to these categories and the vast majority are over 80% - with most of those reporting well over 80%. Please be aware that cuts have already taken place in many of these areas this school year and additional, more severe cuts are expected next year and the following year.
- **Learn and Serve SC Service-Learning Grant Writing Workshop** – This workshop is for school districts and nonprofits interested in applying for a Learn and Serve grant. Learn and Serve is sponsored by the SC Department of Education and funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The workshop will be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 from 10:00 AM until 1:00 PM at the Career Development Center, 8016 Wilson Blvd., Columbia, SC 29203. Please contact Rosalind Davis at rdavis@ed.sc.gov with any questions and to **register by April 15, 2010.**

- **Enough is Enough Rally for Public Education** - as the SC Senate begins debating the budget for public education, education supporters from all over South Carolina will be joining together to make their voices heard and ensure that public education is a top funding priority in the midst of the state's financial downturn. The Columbia rally will take place on Wednesday, April 14 on the Gervais Street side of the State House. Plan to assemble beginning at 4:30 PM. Details for this rally and other regional rallies can be found at www.enoughisenoughonline.info. Be sure to contact your Senator personally to urge his support for public education.
- **SIC Elections – Spring or Fall?** – State law says that SIC elections must be completed by October 15 each year. Many schools have begun to hold elections in the spring for the following school year rather than in the fall – a practice that SC-SIC encourages. If SIC elections are completed in the spring, which gives the new members time to meet and gain an understanding of their role and also gives the principal time to sit down with elected members and make decisions about who needs to be recruited for the appointed membership. This extra planning time means that the full School Improvement Council is ready to hit the ground running when school opens in August. Need help with your elections? Contact SC-SIC – that's what we're here for.
- **It's Not too Late to Fill Out Your Census Form** if you haven't already done so. It can't be stressed too much how important it is for you to fill this out and return it so that you can be counted. The census directs the allocation of billions of dollars in government funding, impacting important planning efforts, including where we build new schools, roads, and hospitals.
- **The Latest Issue of Council News** – is now available online at <http://sic.sc.gov> and will be in your mailbox soon!

Remember, *CLIPS & QUIPS* is sent to all SIC members who share their email addresses with us. Please print out and share this information with other SIC members who have not received it. We are here to help you, so please contact us any time!

Cassie

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